

HEATHER CAM

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SURVIVAL

A week after the break-up
appear casually
amidst smashed shells,
trailing decayed garlands of weed,
and note:

The pools are dry again,
their salt-crushed rims
smelling faintly of tears;
the sponges, once so responsive,
are high and dry,
stiff and stinking on the beach;
the sky is reeling,
washed out, exhausted, incapable of emotion;
the sea-birds register nothing
behind unblinking pebble eyes,
but scream as they plunge,
chiselled and deadly,
to splinter the sea beneath their white fury;
the surf pounds and pounds
impersonal, enduring.

And realise,
with amazement, with relief,
there's nothing here you'd want to take away —
except the sound and assault of the wind
tracing ripple patterns in the sand,
erasing your footprints,
inducing amnesia
amidst the flotsam and jetsam.